

Today, that small business started by one man employs more than 300 people in Western North Carolina and Drake software is used by over 20,000 tax professionals across the Nation. In 2006 alone, Drake software delivered over 6 million Federal returns and 5 million State returns.

But, Phil Drake's success extends far beyond his business savvy and entrepreneurial spirit.

Phil has implemented a set of core principles at Drake Enterprises that are an excellent model for all to follow. Those core principles include: a commitment to follow Biblical principles, motivating and helping employees achieve their maximum potential, and rewarding employees for excellence and loyalty.

Phil has not limited those principles to his business; he has shared them with the community. Whether working to bring high-speed Internet access to the mountains through Balsam West Fiber Net, in his church, or being the drive behind Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts, Phil Drake has been a leader in every sense of the word.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Phil Drake and thanking him for his service to his community and our country.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE KEATHLEY

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mrs. EMERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mike Keathley, of Dexter, Missouri, for his noble service to the people of Missouri. Because of Mike's expertise and leadership, Missouri State government works better and more effectively for all citizens.

Mike has always possessed a deep sense of community and true desire to improve the lives of his fellow citizens. As Commissioner of Office of Administration for the State of Missouri, Mike has done more than any other person to improve the State's budget situation and ensure government is delivered more responsibly and effectively to all citizens. I know Mike personally and can attest to the fact that his dedication and steadfast leadership are responsible for making these improvements possible.

Mike has played a crucial role in bettering lives in the private sector as well. He has served admirably on the Board of Directors of numerous companies and associations, including the Dexter Memorial Hospital and his church, the First United Methodist Church of Dexter. I am confident his successes have been closely observed and duplicated throughout our community and State. Mike serves as a tremendous role model for all Missourians, especially those among the younger generation beginning new careers, whether they be in the public sector or private sector.

Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege to honor Mike Keathley for his many achievements and the profound impact he has made on his community, State and Nation. I ask that you join me along with Mike's family, friends and the entire State of Missouri in paying tribute to his remarkable career.

BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION CON- DEMNING IRAN'S PERSECUTION OF BAHAI'S

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today, along with my colleague ROB ANDREWS, I am introducing a bipartisan resolution to condemn Iran's continued persecution of its Baha'i minority.

In 2006, Iran's Armed Forces Command Headquarters ordered the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Police Force to identify members of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and monitor their activities.

In that same year, we saw the largest roundup of Baha'is since the 1980s. The Iranian Interior Ministry ordered provincial officials to "cautiously and carefully monitor and manage" all Baha'i social activities. The Central Security Office of Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology ordered 81 Iranian universities to expel any student discovered to be a Baha'i.

In 2007, the situation worsened. More than two-thirds of the Baha'is enrolled in universities were expelled once identified as Baha'is. Police entered Baha'i homes and businesses to collect details on family members.

Twenty-five industries were ordered to deny licenses to Baha'is. Employers were pressured to fire Baha'i employees and banks were instructed to refuse loans to Baha'i-owned businesses. Baha'i cemeteries were destroyed.

In November 2007, three Baha'i youths were detained for educating underprivileged children. The following month, the Iranian Parliament published a draft Islamic penal code, requiring the death penalty for all "apostates"—a term applied to Baha'is and any convert away from Islam.

This government-sponsored persecution must end. The world cannot be silent as Iran prepares to ethnically cleanse its Baha'i minority.

I urge my colleagues to join us in cosponsoring this bipartisan resolution condemning Iran's persecution of the Baha'is, calling for the immediate release of three Baha'i youths and calling on Iran to reject a recent draft Islamic penal code requiring the death penalty for all "apostates."

TRIBUTE TO HAL BRUNO

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend of mine, Hal Bruno—an individual that most of you will know best for his 50-year career as a professional journalist whose integrity and trust earned him the respect and approbation of his peers and politicians alike. Today, however, I'd like to recognize another, perhaps lesser known, side of Hal—his more than 30-year commitment to the men and women of the fire service.

Recently, Hal Bruno announced that he was stepping down as Chairman of the National

Fallen Firefighters Foundation, the organization established by the Congress to honor our fallen heroes and assist their families and co-workers. It was with deep regret that the board of directors accepted his resignation. Since 1993, Hal has served with distinction on the board of directors, the last seven as chairman. For Hal and his lovely wife, Meg, the Foundation is that ray of light that has guided family members of fallen firefighters through their dark journeys.

When a firefighter falls in the line of duty, Hal likens it to losing a family member. Long after the death, Hal has always been there to provide comfort and assistance to the family members, no matter how long it takes for them to regain their strength and move ahead with their lives. The Foundation and the fire service, itself, are fortunate to have had a leader with such compassion and dedication as my friend, Hal Bruno.

Always humble, Hal has always been one to credit the professional staff of the Foundation for the positive impact the Foundation has made on the people it serves—family members of our fallen heroes. But Hal, through his leadership, inspiration and selfless dedication—set the course of the Foundation in a new direction, resulting in a tremendous growth of the Foundation's programs during his years as chairman. Those of us involved with the fire service are pleased to hear that he will continue to serve as an active member of the board of directors.

To both Hal and Meg Bruno, I extend my personal thanks and the thanks and gratitude of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, for their dedication to our first responders, and, especially, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. I ask my colleagues to join with me in paying tribute to Hal and congratulating him upon his retirement and a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL COSTELLO

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring a very special person, Mr. Paul Costello, for his outstanding work with young men and women from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In organizing the Washington-Ireland Program for Service and Leadership, Paul has used his boundless energy, enthusiasm and passion for peace to bring together students from varying backgrounds to learn about one another as they also gain valuable work experience in our Nation's Capital. Promoting cultural understanding among the next generation has united students to face the challenges of the future together, in keeping with the spirit of the Northern Ireland peace process.

I have been fortunate to host young men and women from the Washington-Ireland Program in my Congressional office during the summer months. I have been impressed with their commitment to positive change as well as their strong desire to develop leadership skills they can put to use when they return home. As a result of Paul Costello's vision and dedication, more than 350 young graduates